

April 3rd 2016

Judicial Redistricting Commission:

We thank all the people who are putting time and effort into finding solutions on this subject. The Musselshell County Commissioners would like to offer some information and our opinion as to how the proposals would affect our county and District 14.

We oppose the redistricting proposals for the following reasons:

Regarding District 14th Judge Spaulding work load:

Judge Spaulding has served a total of 28 counties other than District 14. He has had 276 cases out of district in the past 12 years. Last year Judge Spaulding worked approximately 45 days out of the 14th District, not including video and telephonic hearings. Judge Spaulding is currently working on 21 cases out of his district.

In calculating Judge Spaulding's time without a law clerk, he has a case load of approximately 1.3 to 1.5 FTE, as he does all of his own work.

Judge Spaulding spends an inordinate amount of time with pro se litigants. 90-95% of our dissolutions cases and parenting plans do not include any attorneys, these people are entitled to the same rights to justice as those with attorneys.

We are concerned citizens would have longer wait times to access the judicial system and this would put a very deep strain on our budget.

We also feel it is imperative to leave all of the Musselshell River Basin counties all in one district as only one judge would have to be petitioned for water commissioners on the Musselshell. Judge Spaulding is one of the only judges who does water well adjudication. Many judges do not do water adjudication and some refuse to do river petitions at all. Having a judge in our district to adjudicate water petitions is vital to our ag producers.

Again, we strongly recommend more time be considered to the issue of Judicial Redistricting, however if we had to choose a proposal, we feel Proposal 3 is the better option.

Respectfully

Musselshell County Commissioners